

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSF-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XQ, SV, NO

SUBJECT: NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROJECT: RESPONSE TO
NORWEGIAN PRESS QUERY

REFERENCE: OSLO 811; STATE 14156

1. GIVEN THE INCERTAIN FUTURE OF THE NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROJECT, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT PUBLIC ATTENTION TO IT IN NORWAY WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME. ANY DECISION TO SEEK TO USE SVALBARD AS A STAGING POINT FOR THE DRIFT PROJECT MUST AWAIT THE RESOLUTION OF THE BASIC QUESTION OF THE FUNDING,UTILITY AND VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT. IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT THE MERIT OF THE PROJECT WARRANTS THE EXPENSE, AND FUNDS CAN BE FOUND, THE DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT A ROLE FOR SVALBARD WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE LOGISTICS PLAN. UNTIL THEN, HOWEVER, WE WOULD PREFER TO KEEP PUBLIC SPECULATION ABOUT THE PROJECT TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.

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2. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, EMBASSY SHOULD SUGGEST TO THE MORGENBLADET REPORTER THAT A STORY ABOUT THE NANSEN DRIFT STATION AT THIS TIME COULD SERVE TO HINDER RATHER THAN HELP THE POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT. IF HE PERSISTS, FOLLOWING POINTS MAY BE MADE IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS LISTED IN OSLO REFTEL:
A) THE SCIENTIFIC PLAN FOR THE NANSEN DRIFT STATION

PROJECT WAS PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND TRANSMITTED TO U.S. GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL AGENCIES, WHO HAVE REVIEWED IT IN TERMS OF PRIORITIES AND MEANS. IN SPITE OF STRONG STATE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT, NO AGENCY HAS DECIDED WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN OR FUND ALL OR A PART OF THE PROJECT.

B) IT IS NOT POSSIBLE NOW TO SAY WHEN THE PROJECT MIGHT BEGIN, EXCEPT THAT IT CANNOT BEGIN UNTIL A DECOMMISSIONED ICEBREAKER IS AVAILABLE FOR USE AS A PLATFORM AND FUNDING SECURED.

C) IT IS NOT POSSIBLE NOW TO SAY WHEN A DECISION WILL BE REACHED IN THE USG ON THE PROJECT.

D) AS THE FOREGOING INDICATES, NO SOURCE OF FUNDS HAS YET BEEN FOUND AMONG U.S. AGENCIES FOR THE PROJECT, THUS THE UNAVOIDABLE DELAY.

E) PROJECT PLANNERS ARE SEEKING FUNDS FROM AS MANY U.S. AGENCIES AS POSSIBLE BUT ARE UNABLE TO REPORT ANY SUCCESS THUS FAR.

3. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT AMBASSADOR LERNER'S STRONG INTERVENTION DURING HIS CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON WILL PRODUCE SOME RESULTS.

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Message Attributes

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